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ABSTRACT

This paper examined policy reform and conflict management in education. Specifically, the discussion focuses on expertise and experimentation as strategies of conflict management in Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany. The course of events during the reform eras is traced. The fate of comparable policies under different political circumstances is discussed. A comparison of the two cases highlights both the possibilities and the limitations of including expertise and policy experimentation in educational reform processes. The Swedish and German experiences with the comprehensive school reforms provide empirical material used in the examination of the interplay between political forces and a rationalist orientation to decision-making, respectively. (53 references) (SI)

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SCHOOL REFORM BETWEEN RATIONALITY AND POLITICS: EXPERTISE AND EXPERIMENTATION AS STRATEGIES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SWEDEN AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

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SCHOOL REFORM BETWEEN RATIONALITY AND POLITICS: EXPERTISE AND EXPERIMENTATION AS STRATEGIES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SWEDEN AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

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Introduction: Policy Reform and Conflict Management in Education

Reforming educational policy carries with it a tremendous potential for social and political conflict, even in relatively stable Western democracies. For families with school-age children, young adults seeking further education, and working people hoping for new opportunities in the job market, government education policies play an important part in their daily lives. When public officials propose changes in the educational system, a broad cross-section of the electorate will probably be concerned about the consequences for themselves and their family members. Sentiments about what education should entail, how it should be organized, and whom should have access to educational opportunities run deep. Proposing macropolitical educational reform[1] is likely to spark public debate. Once unleashed, the political concerns voiced by the attentive public require a response by politicians and public officials who then may feel obligated to set the process of policy review and reform in motion. Occasionally the cycle of problem recognition and response will lead

[1]See Martin Carnoy and Henry M. Levin's Schooling and Work in the Democratic State (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), chapter 8 for a typology of educational reforms, in particular pp. 218, 225-229. "The most comprehensive educational reforms are macropolitical in that they represent alterations of the governance and control of schooling. Whereas micropolitical changes refer to modifications in decision-making roles among those groups internal to the schooling process -- students, teachers, and administrators -- the macropolitical ones address the overall control of the educational enterprise. The all-embracing nature of these changes means that they are likely to have profound effects upon the micropolitical and the technical characteristics of education." (p. 225) This was indeed the case in both the Swedish and German comprehensive school reforms.

to proposals for major reform initiatives, as was the case in both the policy reform processes discussed here.

During the period from 1940 until 1962,[2] Swedish policy officials introduced and implemented a series of policy experiments and reforms which restructured the secondary school system. A new unified school form known as the comprehensive school,[3] along the lines of the American high school, eventually replaced the traditional divided system of schools which sorted children at the age of ten or eleven into academic and vocational tracks, each with its own school forms. In Germany, similar reforms were first seriously considered for widespread implementation during the 1960s. Despite an enormous program of policy experimentation and research, the new Gesamtschulen did not replace the traditional tripartite structure of German secondary education. Instead, only a few of the experimental schools have survived. They now comprise an additional official school form, incorporated into the existing organization of schooling at the secondary level.

Tracing the course of events during the reform eras provides an opportunity to examine the fate of comparable policies under very different political circumstances. In both cases experts, research, and policy experimentation played an important part in the development of reform strategies. Despite these similarities, however, the outcomes of the two

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[2]An extended program of educational reform continued even after this time, but those reforms dealing with issues such as the inner workings of the schools are not discussed here. The current study is restricted to the reforms directly associated with the introduction of the comprehensive school.

[3]Enhetsskolan which later took the name Grundskolan because the negative association of the former name with the political conflict over its implementation was viewed as a hindrance to the broader acceptance of the new school form.

policy processes were quite different. The incorporation of rationalistic elements -- expertise, research, and experimentation -- by no means guaranteed the success of the proposed reforms. Even more importantly, the use of experts and policy experimentation had very different consequences for the process of reform itself. A comparison of the two cases is particularly revealing because it highlights both the possibilities and the limitations of including expertise and policy experimentation in educational reform processes.

Experts, particularly in the fields of education and pedagogy, played important roles in identifying the need for educational reform in both countries. They served on important public commissions responsible for formulating plans to organize and implement reforms. Along the way toward reform, large scale experimental programs were initiated ,in part as an interim response to pressure for change. The experimental programs were more than just a way to test whether the new schools would work. They represented an temporary compromise. For supporters of reform, full and immediate restructuring of secondary education was not politically feasible since it would almost certainly provoke strong opposition from conservative politicians and the powerful academic teachers unions of the elite segment of the traditional, divided secondary school system. The experimental programs provided an opportunity to launch reforms while gathering political support. Opponents of reform, on the other hand, demanded that the experimental schools be "scientifically evaluated," fully expecting that the new school form would not meet the standards of the elite schools.

Making time in the policy process for experimentation and expert consultation buys valuable time for nearly everyone involved. Supporters hope

for a foot in the door and a chance to win greater support, dispel misconceptions and fears, and refine the policy in its practical application. Their adversaries expect to mobilize opposition to reform, gather evidence to dissuade the uncommitted, and demonstrate the weaknesses of the new schools. Public officials caught in the crossfire can nevertheless fulfill their obligation to take action without necessarily having to commit themselves fully to one or the other policy options.

At the heart of the debate about educational policy which spurred the introduction of the comprehensive school were two different sets of values, two different world views that were in conflict. The question of whether to separate high school age students into academic, general, and/or vocational schools pitted those who promoted the achievement standards of the elitist school organization against those who advocated a more egalitarian approach to secondary education. Experts and experimentation might provide guidance about the organization and practices suitable to one or the other set of goals, but no amount of research or expertise could offer a solution to the basic conflict of values. Nevertheless, the powerful belief in the usefulness of expertise and scientific evaluation constituted a critical point of agreement among the various political forces in both countries. Expert advice and consultation along with policy experimentation and its evaluation can be used as powerful source of legitimacy for both sides in the controversy and for public officials who felt pressed to respond but feared the backlash from an unpopular policy.[4] However, when the application of expertise and the use of

[4]For an extensive discussion of the range of political roles experts can play in politics, see Guy Benveniste, The Politics of Expertise (2nd ed.) (San Francisco: Boyd & Fraser, 1977).

experiments failed to produce a consensus or viable compromise on policy goals and means, the conflict management potential of expertise and experimentation were considerably reduced, if not altogether eliminated. The Swedish and German experiences with the comprehensive school reforms provide empirical material for examining the interplay between political forces and a rationalist orientation to decision-making.

Sources of Political Conflict in Educational Reform

Public policy-making can be seen as a dynamic mixture of rational decision-making, political conflict mediation, and extraneous influences.[5] To understand the process by which public policy is generated, therefore, requires an investigation into the historical events of the political process and the interplay of a variety of forces. For example, bargaining and coalition-building to form a consensus in support of a particular policy option can run counter to the necessary conditions, demands of, or recommendations produced by a rationality-based decision-making process. To arrive at a stable policy outcome, these contradiction must be resolved in a way which does not engender further escalation of political conflict.

At least three important aspects of the comprehensive school as a policy objective require further elaboration in order to grasp the particular dynamics of the policy reform process undertaken in Sweden and West Germany. These include the role of the state in educational provision, the structure of

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[5]The view of the policy process adopted here has been developed by, among others, Johan P. Olsen in "Public Policy-Making and Theories of Organizational Choice," Scandinavian Political Studies 7 (1972), pp. 45-62. See also Michael D. Cohen, James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice," Administrative Studies Quarterly 17 (1972):1-25.

interests attached to the educational system, and the policy question of how best to organize secondary education.

(1) Education and the State: Legitimation Deficits

Some of the complications which arise in educational policy-making stem from the central role education and schooling play in the reproduction of class differences and distribution of skills for the labor market. The contradictory roles of the state -- caught between promoting conditions conducive to economic growth and legitimating its authority as a democratic system which promotes the basic tenets of individual liberty, equality, and participation by citizens in government -- confound policy-making in a variety of areas.[6]

Education in industrialized society has been linked ever more closely to the allocation of social status and income-earning potential.[7] The unique

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[6]These include not only education but economic management, social welfare, health, the environment, and energy policy. For an important approach to the analysis of the role of the state in balancing competing claims and challenges to its authority, see Claus Offe, Contradictions of the Welfare State (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984). Some interesting treatments of different policy issues which share this general perspective, see Dorothy Nelkin, Technological Decisions and Democracy: European Experiments in Public Participation (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977); Dorothy Nelkin and Michael Pollack, "The Politics of Participation and the Nuclear Debate in Sweden, The Netherlands, and Austria," Public Policy 25 (1977):323-57; idem., The Atom Besieged (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981); Matthew A. Crenson, The Un-Politics of Air Pollution: A Study of Non-Decisionmaking in the Cities (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); Meinolf Dierkes, Hans N. Weiler, and Ariane Berthoin Antal, eds., Comparative Public Policy: Learning from Experience (London: Gower, 1987); and Herbert Kitschelt, Kernenergiepolitik. Arena eines gesellschaftlichen Konflikts (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 1980).

[7]"The education system is the principal public institution organized for shaping youth into working adults, but schools are subject to conflicting forces over their purpose and operation. Public education both reproduces the unequal hierarchical relations of the nuclear family and capitalist workplace and also presents opportunities for social mobility and the extension of democratic rights.

"...[S]chooling, like all the institutions of capitalist society, operates in the context of social conflict. Schooling is shaped by the nature of that

innovation of the welfare state has been to link together the twin imperatives of economic growth and increasing social equality. Corporatist mediation arrangements[8] are predicated on the assumption that economic growth is pursued precisely in order that it can be redistributed in a more equitable fashion. Wage restraint, for example, reflects labor's commitment to this constructive compromise and social welfare provisions and Keynesian economic policies represent the concessions of business. Radical egalitarianism has given way to policy compromises which tend to promote social mobility and education has become the cornerstone of ensuring opportunities for self-betterment in the socioeconomic system.

Progressive liberal ideology stressed social mobility through individual achievement. It joined with the emerging social values represented by the Social Democratic Parties in Sweden during the late 1930s to mid 1940s and in the Federal Republic of Germany during the mid to late 1960s to produce a

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conflict, and what schooling does helps shape the conflict. Even as schools reproduce capitalist class relations, contradictions to capitalist development emerge from that very reproductive process. The State tries to help employers raise profits, but at the same time it has to legitimate itself by providing benefits to labor and making society more just. Set in the arena of social conflict, the State therefore disseminates a contradictory ideology that tries to build faith both in capitalism and in democracy. Public education is both a subsidy to employers and a way for workers to gain social mobility; it trains young people to be good workers and good democrats, reproducing a class-structured labor force to fit into a historically defined division of labor, but also inculcating aspirations about the nature of work in a democratic society." Martin Carnoy and Henry M. Levin, Schooling and Work in the Democratic State (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 76.

[8]This refers to the system of interest representation in Scandinavia, Germany, and other parts of Europe by which organized labor's peak associations negotiate directly with the peak employers' organizations over the terms of labor contracts and related issues. It also includes the formal representation of both organized labor and organized business in the process of structured consultation by which public policy is made.

broad-based consensus in favor of educational reform. The central "myth"[9] legitimating social and economic inequality -- equality through education -- was losing credibility among social reformers and a growing segment of the general public. This discrepancy between ideology and educational practice had to be addressed. Particularly once the Social Democratic parties came to power in Sweden (1932) and West Germany (1969), the need for educational reform became a test of the legitimacy of their authority to exercise of state power.[10]

(2) Interest Groups in Education

Behind government educational policy stands an entire institutional structure with vested interests: teachers, parents, students, administrators, employers, bureaucrats, and education specialists. In the traditional educational systems of Northern Europe, teachers in the academic secondary schools have long enjoyed considerable prestige which they have fiercely guarded in the face of efforts to democratize education. The comprehensive school issue cut to the core of this concern. In a unified secondary school form, teachers would be integrated into a single institution and over time, differences in status and influence between academic and non-academic teachers

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[9]Roland Barthes, Mythologies (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972) offers examples of how themes in everyday life can be interpreted and analyzed as fictitious constructs about the relationship between objects and their meanings. Murray Edelman's Constructing the Political Spectacle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) provides a provocative analysis of the ways in which these myths or social narratives are created and perpetuated.

[10]As Jameson has astutely observed in his introduction to Lyotard's analysis of the postmodern condition, "...legitimation becomes visible as a problem and an object of study only at the point in which it is called into question." (Frederic Jameson, Foreword to Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, trans., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984 (French original 1979), p. viii.)

could be expected to fade. Among the most acrimonious and vehement voices against the comprehensive schools in both Sweden and Germany were the academic teachers' organizations. They made themselves heard not only in the editorials of their own publications and the daily presses, but also directly to politicians and public officials. Without their support, educational reform would be impossible unless state authority was exercised to compel them to accept the reforms. Politicians and public officials were well aware of the conflict potential, especially if academic teachers mobilized the opposition of parents, students, and university colleaques.

For their part, parents and youth were also keenly interested in the proposed reforms. While the new school promised to open up educational opportunities for the disadvantaged, parents had understandable misgivings about sending their children to untried schools. The status of diplomas issued from new schools was unclear and many families, uncertain about the purpose and future of the comprehensive school, might reasonably be expected to opt instead for the traditional schools given the opportunity. Again, acceptance of the reform would come either through persuasion or by dictate. Public authorities clearly preferred to win parents and students over to the new schools, rather than forcing them to attend and only eventually accept the change.

(3) Existing Educational Practices: Differentiation

The critical "flaw" of the traditional school system from the reformist perspective presented a difficult issue to resolve. The question of "differentiation" emerged as the central concern of experts and policy experimentation in both Sweden and West Germany. The traditional education system operated on the basis of the assumption that children have different

aptitudes, abilities, and intelligence levels which can be identified from a fairly early stage in the child's development. The traditional parallel school system divided students into different programs and school forms according to their demonstrated abilities at the age of ten or so. Children from better educated and wealthier families were overrepresented in the academic, selective segments of the educational system. Two conflicting sets of values which faced off in the comprehensive school battle. On one side were those who believed that society should promote the brightest and the best. Merging aristocratic notions of elite privilege with ideas about individual achievement, modern conservatives advocated meritocratic policies which promoted only students with demonstrated abilities to the academic and selective schools. According to this point of view, society wasted valuable resources providing academic educations to those who neither merited such an opportunity nor required that kind of education for their station in life. From the other perspective, differentiation was an important selection mechanism by which class distinctions were reproduced over time and from one generation to the next. Education was unlikely to provide real social mobility under these circumstances.

The technical question both sides focussed on was at what age these abilities matured and whether distinctly different programs of studies were needed to accommodate these developmental differences. In order to provide a scientific answer to this question, experts and researchers were consulted. Research revealed, however, that theoretical and manual skills tend to be positively correlated within individuals so that a child with an aptitude for theoretical reasoning is also likely to possess an elevated aptitude for practical studies and manual skills. In effect, researchers found that the

main assumption underlying the existing organization of schooling was empirically unfounded. In a system of early differentiation, bright students were more likely to be channelled into the prestigious academic lines of study. This meant that early differentiation not only tended to reproduce class differences; it also might be depleting the working class of its own "natural" intellectual leadership.

The problem with the differentiation issue was that it did not lend itself to expert resolution. Research might reveal the nature of aptitudes and the developmental tendencies associated with talent and learning, but it could not provide an answer to the underlying conflict over which set of values society should choose: meritocracy or egalitarianism. Should children of different abilities receive different educations? This problem presented a basic value disagreement in society and was the most intractable dimension of conflict.

The Use of Expertise and Policy Experimentation

In both Sweden and West Germany, state officials responsible for educational policy turned to an alternative source of authority to assist them in designing, "selling," and implementing their reform programs. While the outcome of reform initiatives could not be predicted during the early stages, by incorporating important rationalist elements into the process, Social Democratic politicians added credence to their expressed commitment to manage the economy effectively while promoting social equality. Expert consultation and policy experimentation set the wheels of change in motion without requiring agreement on the final disposition of reform proposals.

In both Sweden and Germany, the reform proposals were debated and drafted by a succession of public commissions. These commissions combined experts in relevant fields of research, representatives of interested parties (especially teachers' organizations and corporatist interests), policy activists, and politicians. In the public eye, the commissions were generally regarded as expert bodies, although in practice they were steered by reform activists.

Policy experimentation provided the added benefits (and costs) of pacing the reforms and their evaluation, at least in theory if not in practice, according to the dictates of the research process already mentioned. But because policy reform almost always alters the relationship between interests attached to the original policy and new interests mobilized or created by the reform, policy change almost always disturbs the distribution of resources among competing interests.[11] The emergent interest dialectic can drastically complicate policy experiments. Policy experiments or model programs can be seen as learning situations not only for policy administrators and practitioners, but also for target groups and affected interests. Teachers, students, parents, and school administrators form opinions and assessments of the features of a policy reform initiative based on their perceptions of the experimental program and then determine how their interests are likely to be affected by the policy change. Consequently, experimental programs can either elicit support or activate opposition prior to formal adoption.

Policy experiments provide a trial or demonstration of proposed reforms and therefore may be advocated by both sides of a political controversy.

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[11]Brian Hogwood and B. Guy Peters, Policy Dynamics (London: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983).

Proponents hope to work out problems and generate support. Adversaries may want experimentation to arouse opposition to the initiative. Experiments can also provide each side with additional ammunition in the political debate. Since experiments often have considerable start-up costs, opponents can argue that the proposal is cost-ineffective. Proponents are able to capitalize on their commitment to "innovation."[12]

Expertise can also be used advantageously by both sides in a political conflict. Because knowledge is socially defined rather than exclusively objective,[13] political advocates can almost always find a "qualified" expert to support their claims. If the authority of experts espousing a particular interpretation or point of view remains unchallenged, they can add legitimacy to the policies they support. When the authority of experts is challenged, however, legitimating decisions on the basis of expertise leads to a "mobilization of bias,"[14] drawing the experts into the political battle. The events in Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany during the comprehensive school reform movement amply demonstrate these dynamics.

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[12]Hans N. Weiler, "Politics of Educational Reform," in Innovation in the Public Sector eds. Richard L. Merritt and Anna J. Merritt (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985), pp. 167-99; and idem, "West Germany: Educational Policy as Compensatory Legitimation," in Politics and Education: Cases from Eleven Nations ed. Murray Thomas (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983), pp. 33-54.

[13]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Anchor Books, 1966).

[14]E.E. Schattschneider, The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960).

Rolling Reform and the Swedish Comprehensive School

The Swedish approach to policy-making was particularly conducive to the integration of experts into decision-making and to the use of policy experimentation as a means of conflict mediation.[15] The policy process formally initiated with the 1946 School Commission appointed by then Minister of Education Tage Erlander eventually led to the adoption of the Grundskolan, a new comprehensive school which replaced the traditional secondary school system. Experts were called upon to provide support for policy goals and objectives which had been established by a group of elites within the Social Democratic Party. With government leadership in the hands of the Social Democrats, the reform process proceeded relatively unhindered by political opposition. Experts were included not only on the public commissions but also within the central government agency, the Swedish Board of Education (SÖ), as a permanent addition to its research and development capabilities. A large scale program of policy experimentation lasting over a decade introduced the new comprehensive school to the Swedish public.

While space does not allow for a complete historical account tracing the process of policy reform,[16] the Swedish reform process involved a succession

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[15]As Heclo and Madsen have observed, in the Swedish system: "Conflict becomes channeled in predictable forms. Political aspirations for reform become merged with issues of technical detail. Those recognized as having a stake in an issue are offered a sense of due process in the making of policies, complex policies that will often require their cooperation in the long run in any case. Potential opponents are likely to become coopted as participants in the negotiated compromises of the final outcome." Hugh Heclo and Henrik Madsen, Policy and Politics in Sweden: Principled Pragmatism (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), p. 15.

[16]For a far more detailed treatment of both case histories, see Leslie C. Eliason, "The Politics of Expertise: Legitimating Educational Policy Reform in Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1988).

of royal commissions, parliamentary commissions, and legislative compromises on the way to the 1962 Riksdag resolution adopting the comprehensive school as a replacement of the previously existing system of secondary education. The two most significant of these included the 1946 School Commission which developed the recommendations leading to the adoption of the 1950 compromise resolution which launched the ten-year experimental program and the 1957 School Commission which reviewed the reports on the experimental program and drafted the compromise which was later revised and passed by the Riksdag in 1962, establishing the comprehensive school as the universal school form.

When the wartime coalition government ended in 1944, Tage Erlander was appointed as the new Minister of Education. His deputy, Josef Weijne, organized the 1946 School Commission even before the more conservative 1940 School Commission chaired by Erlander's predecessor had concluded its work. The 1946 commission was made up of both politicians and educational authorities. The directive from Erlander was short and gave the members considerable latitude to develop their own goals without interference from outsiders. But the several of the individuals appointed to the 1946 commission had also been members of a special Social Democratic Party committee which had drafted a report on recommended changes in the educational system. They brought with them, therefore, a ready-made agenda for reform.[17] In the course of their deliberations, the 1946 commission prepared extensive documentation and reports on the proposed reforms.

[17]One of the most influential members of both groups was Alva Myrdal. Her views are elaborated in Vad vi vill (Stockholm: Sveriges socialdemokratiska kvinnoförbund, 1944).

Experts served principally as members of special "delegations" assisting the 1946 commission. Experts, politicians, and policy makers broke down into smaller working groups to address specific aspects of the reform program. This facilitated a more thorough-going analysis of the problems confronting the Swedish educational system and the range of possible solutions. It allowed the commission to engage in a broad-based review of many of the issues which remained unsettled even given the work of the 1940 commission. Experts here were clearly subjugated to the decisions of a politically composed commission. While within the delegations the experts outnumbered the politicians, decisions about what should be included in the reports delivered by the commission to the government were strictly in the hands of political appointees. With a solid Social Democratic majority on the commission and the absence of a strong exponent of Conservative Party views during the period leading up to the recommendation on the principles to guide the reform, a recommendation in favor of an undifferentiated nine-year comprehensive school was assured.

What limited special research commissioned by the 1946 group gave inconclusive results with respect to the controversial differentiation issue. Elmgren's study revealed that the prevailing notion concerning the distribution of aptitudes and talents into two groups of pupils -- academically inclined and practically inclined -- was without empirical justification.[18] However, it provided little relevant information concerning

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[18]John Elmgren, "Appendix II" to 1940 års skolutrednings betänkande och utredning (Stockholm: Statens Offentliga Utredningarna, 1940); see also idem., School and Psychology. A Report on the Research Work of the 1946 School Commission. Skoloverstyrelsens skriftserie 27 (Stockholm: Statens Offentliga Utredningarna, 1948).

whether and when differentiation should take place. The commission's membership was well aware, however, of the researcher's view with respect to the differentiation question. Elmgren had been the only one of the four professors consulted by the 1940 commission who favored later differentiation.

The final proposal which emerged from the 1946 commission endorsed the Social Democratic Party's position even though research and expert opinion were acknowledged as incomplete or inconclusive on the differentiation issue. The 1946 commission sought to preempt resistance by soliciting expressions of interest in the proposed experimental program from local school district authorities, even though the commission lacked the authority to do so. They sought grass-root support through the enticement of funding to expand local student capacity by adding experimental schools.

Subsequent parliamentary debate gave rise to over twenty resolutions and amendments to the government's proposal to initiate experimental reforms. Consequently, the parliamentary politicians entered into negotiations to reword the quite explicit proposal delivered by the commission and then reformulated by the Ministry of Education and Ecclesiastical Affairs into the government's bill. The result of the Sandler committee's[19] negotiations was an ambiguously formulated bill to which all parties could agree. The major element in this compromise was a shift in the intent of the experimental period. Experimental implementation was no longer to serve as a time simply to work out difficulties and to allow local school districts and teachers to adapt to the new school. Rather, the new language allowed conservatives to

[19]This was a multipartisan committee of members of parliament headed by Richard Sandler and charged with reaching a compromise bill which would enjoy widespread support.

view experimentation as a period during which the viability of the comprehensive school would be tested. The ambiguous wording implied to some that the widespread adoption of the new school form was still under review. Conservatives hoped that the new school would have to incorporate a substantial element of differentiation. They anticipated that they could retain existing school forms as an alternative to the new school.

Proponents viewed experimentation as it was defined in the revised proposal as a gradualist approach to reform, allowing the comprehensive school to gain a firm foothold at the local level. Experimentation was to be organized so that it targeted the most pressing needs of the local communities, in particular the addition of increased student capacity. In this way, the new school was given an opportunity to demonstrate its utility in addressing many of the problems confronting educators.

The period of experimentation also provided the rationale for a rapid and thorough incorporation of research and expertise into the central educational administration. With the comprehensive school experiments came funding for a new division within the SÖ dedicated to research and supervision of experimental programs. This provided an ongoing internalized resource of experienced experts to sustain the reforms through the ten-year experimental phase. The permanent addition of the research division represented a commitment to "rolling reform," an approach emphasizing continual renewal of national educational policy and practice.

With the new research division of the SÖ, evaluation efforts could be conducted or at least directed and coordinated from within the central agency governing education. Even when evaluators from the Institute for Pedagogical Research (an independent organization) were charged with carrying out the

expert evaluation of the ten-year experimental program, the SÖ retained administrative responsibility for drafting the report.

Because the research division was created during the reform process, most of the individuals employed there favored the comprehensive school. This meant that despite some opposition from other divisions of the SÖ, the administrative component directly responsible for overseeing the experimental program was committed to providing constructive support for reform.

But even endangered departments in the central administration were brought around in support of the reform. Members of the research division were in daily contact with other administrators engaged in supervising other areas of the educational system. Despite the fact that Swedish bureaucratic norms governing behavior discourage open advocacy, administrators in the SÖ tended to play a limited advocacy role for the segment of the educational system for which they were responsible. Daily interaction and norms emphasizing cooperation and consensus in the Swedish central administrative corps enhanced coordination efforts during the crucial phases of experimentation and reduced the impact of potential conflicts between old and new parts of the school system.

The process of structured consultation continued to play an important role in the adoption of the Swedish comprehensive school right up until its formal adoption in 1962. The Social Democratic coalition with the Agrarian Party broke down in 1957 and when an exclusively Social Democratic administration took power in the autumn of 1957, Tage Erlander became Prime Minister. Under the new Minister of Education Ragnar Edenmann, the 1957 School Commission was appointed.

The 1957 commission was originally supposed to summarize the experiences gained from the experimental program. Its directive made it clear that the experimental program should not be interrupted. Recognizing that the central issue of differentiation required political agreement, the minister appointed mostly politicians to the 1957 commission. Edenmann, like his predecessors before him, chaired the commission he appointed. Both organized labor (the LO) and the employers' federation (SAF) were formally represented for the first time.

At least fifty experts were designated to assist the 1957 commission. Most of them were subject matter specialists. To a far greater extent than the earlier two commissions, the 1957 School Commission stimulated the production of research and reports from a wide variety of sources including social scientists, experts, and educational practitioners. Much of the actual work of the commission was carried out in the numerous expert delegations. The commission worked for four years and delivered seven bound reports including a central report of 881 pages.[20] This period was characterized by a more structured interaction between educational research and the educational reform movement. For the first time the commission stipulated the research questions which required answers.[21] Like its predecessors, the 1957 commission also solicited the opinions of the then eight professors of education. Four responded and their responses were published, but the impact

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[20]"Grundskolan, 1957 Års Skolberedning VI," Skriftserie 30, (Stockholm: Statens Offentliga Utredningarna, 1961).

[21]The 1940 commission simply consulted the existing professorate in education and made use of their expertise as members of the commission in formulating their reports. The 1946 commission utilized research conducted by Elmgren, but this was the only formal research project they solicited and the researcher himself determined the questions to which he sought answers.

was considerably less than the comparable report associated with the 1940 commission.[22]

During the period of the 1957 School Commission's deliberations (1957-1961), the positions of the political parties became increasingly clear. The Social Democrats eventually revised their position to allow for differentiation in the ninth and final year of compulsory schooling.[23] Over the course of the experimental period, it became clear that the Conservatives had suffered a political defeat adoption of the 1950 reform decision. Lacking strong support from teachers and parents, the Conservative Party's opposition to the reforms was gradually losing ground.

In 1958, the SÖ appointed a group to provide a review of the decade of experimentation with the comprehensive school. By the late spring of 1959, a preliminary version of the report had been delivered to the 1957 commission as a courtesy and perhaps to test the waters. The mixed results of the experimental program identified in the report led the 1957 School Commission to request further clarifications. While the report was not a ringing endorsement of the comprehensive school, it fulfilled its most important function: satisfying the criterion of objectivity established by the Riksdag in the 1950 resolution. Perhaps this commitment to objectivity explains why no serious disagreements developed within the working group which formulated it. The report suggested that educational practice had dictated some important modifications to the radical reforms advocated by the Social

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[22]John Elmgren, Torsten Husen, Wilhelm Sjostrand, and Arne Trankell, Skolan och differentieringen. Fyra professorer har ordet (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1959).

[23]The party made this position clear in its publication Den Nya Skola (Stockholm: Tiden, 1960).

Democratic Party. Hence, even Conservatives were forced to concede that the report had included a wide range of opinion and the diverse experiences of the experimental schools.

Members of the 1957 commission gathered for a summer retreat at Sigtuna in June of 1959. There they discussed both the ten-year report of the SÖ's experimental program and the thorny issue of differentiation. The commission decided to continue to deliberate on the proper formulation of a resolution to the differentiation debate. The following year (1960) the group held its summer retreat on the island of Visby to hammer out an acceptable compromise. The idea of a group communique came up in the course of reviewing and summarizing reports which had been submitted.[24] The members of the 1957 commission unanimously endorsed the communique which suggested that differentiation should be retained only in the ninth grade.

The Visby compromise, like the 1950 agreement on principles, rested on an ambiguous formulation that would allow a political decision to be reached while leaving the specific implementation issues unresolved. When the Minister of Education attempted to clarify these ambiguous formulations in a press interview, he refueled political debate. The press continued to carry editorials and letters for nearly six months. It was only then that teachers organizations mobilized in opposition to the proposal.

By the summer of 1961, protest had begun to slack off. The 1957 commission finalized its report on June 10, 1961, releasing it publicly three weeks later. During the course of the final Riksdag debates, the Conservative membership of the 1957 commission was pressured into withdrawing her consent

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[24]Sixten Marklund, Från reform till reform. SkolSverige 1950-1975. vol. 3. (Stockholm: Liber Utbildnings Förlaget, 1983), pp. 54-5.

to the Visby compromise. But by then it was too late and the Conservative Party's credibility as an honest broker had been undermined. Lacking sufficient votes in the parliament to pose a serious threat, the Conservatives were also unable to muster sufficient opposition during the remiss process which concluded on November 15, 1961. Five months later, the government submitted its bill. As in 1950, a special joint conference committee composed of members from both chambers of the Riksdag and representing all parties except the Communists was formed to deal with the over 292 pages of motions entered into the official protocol of the Riksdag. Their proposal, released May 10, 1962 and debated on May 22, was eventually adopted and the new Grundskolan became the official school form.

The German Comprehensive School: An Ambiguous Reform Outcome

Following the alarm sounded by prominent social figures in the mid to late 1960s, a period of intensive efforts to reform the West German educational system was initiated.[25] Unlike their Swedish counterparts, German reformers did not succeed in replacing the traditional tripartite structure of secondary education with a single unified comprehensive school. Despite the extensive use of research, the widespread and intensive involvement and commitment of experts, researchers, and academics involved in the field of education, and even though large sums of money were invested in policy experimentation, today the Gesamtschule can at best be called "the mighty

[25]Georg Picht, Die deutsche Bildungskatastrophe (Olten: Walter, 1964); Ralf Dahrendorf, Bildung ist Bürgerrecht, Pladoyer für eine aktive Bildungspolitik (Hamburg: Nannen, 1965).

midget" coexisting alongside the existing system of academic, vocational, and general education secondary schools.[26]

During the course of the reform period (late 1960s to 1982), experts became embroiled in a heated political struggle not only over policy goals, but also over which level of government -- federal or Land -- should determine the development of the educational system. Experimentation provided a means of launching the reform effort on a national scale. Reformers hoped to build a clientele for the comprehensive school while avoiding a direct and early confrontation with opponents.

West German reformers, particularly at the federal level, sought recommendations not just for changes in secondary education, but for a complete overhaul of the educational structure. While this may well have been a necessary set of policy objectives for the long term, reformers plunged into deep waters by taking on the entire range of educational policy issues at once. The Brandt government's declaration of 1969 featured its party's (SPD) proposals for educational reform, including those to restructure secondary education. By June of 1970, the joint federal-Länder commission (BLK) had been formed to foster cooperation in policy-making. With representatives from the federal government and the Land ministries of education, the BLK could negotiate policies which had a good chance at being enacted in the individual Länder. Their first task was to develop a master plan for the educational system.

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[26]Max Planck Institute for Human Development and Education, Between Elite and Mass Education: Education in the Federal Republic of Germany (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983; chapter 10.

Because the German Basic Law reserved educational policy (and cultural policy in general) for the Länder to determine, the federal government had only a limited legal basis for developing an educational policy. But the concerns giving rise to the reforms were of national importance. Because of the dispersion of decision-making, financial limitations, and the reduced institutional capacity of the individual Länder governments, long range planning and the mobilization of research for educational policy purposes was at best limited.

Despite legal restrictions, the federal government sought centralized coordination of research and experimentation in the field of education. In 1969, a federal ministry of education and science was established to serve as an institutional foundation for mobilizing educational research and expertise to assist with planning and reform. Planning constituted a mechanism for steering the policies of the Länder. By setting long range goals for educational policy, the federal government hoped to set the process of reform in motion. With considerably more resources at its disposal and no responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the educational system, the federal government could devote personnel and funds to long-range and comprehensive planning tasks.

The creation of a federal ministry to address educational and scientific matters was an important step both symbolically and practically toward increasing the role of the federal government in educational matters. Through its rapid preparation of the 1970 educational report in conjunction with the leadership exercised by educational activists in the Education Commission of

the Bildungsrat,[27] the federal government had begun its attempt to take the reins of comprehensive and long-range planning, despite opposition from Christian Democratically controlled Länder governments. The federal government allocated substantial funds for experimentation and accompanying research, but it could only create incentives to engage in reform. It did not have the authority to mandate change without the consent of the Länder governments.

Experimental programs promoted a climate of objectivity and scientific evaluation of policy alternative and projected an image of the federal government as a competent technocratic manager of educational policy. Federal funding introduced in 1969 to support policy experiments facilitated reform during the first stages by creating an economic incentive for federal states to participate in the program.

From 1971 on, the BLK initiated an extensive program of experimentation and research, financed largely by monies allocated by the federal government. Over 130 experimental schools were included in the program during the period

[27]An important set of institutional histories accompanied the reform process in West Germany. In 1965, the Bildungsrat was established. This commission was to serve as a deliberative body to plan for the needs of the German educational system. It was the Education Commission of this group which, through its work and research, laid the foundation for the experimental program which introduced the comprehensive school. The ambitious plans of the first Bildungsrat (1966-1969) were overwhelmed during its second and final term (1970-1974) by political opposition and the practical difficulties arising from the experimental program. By that time, the joint Bund-Länder educational planning commission (BLK) had taken over the job of supervising the experimental program. While the Bildungsrat had no formal powers to make policy, the BLK was organized to allow for joint decision-making between the two levels of government and among the federal states. This made for a situation, however, where the CDU/CSU governed Länder could exercise a veto on unacceptable proposals.

from 1971 to 1982 and an enormous volume of research known as Begleitforschung was conducted in conjunction with the experimental program.

But the experimental program was really the brainchild of the Educational Commission of the Bildungsrat, a public commission which exercised considerable independence in promoting educational reform during the early phase of the policy process (approximately 1968 to 1973). The Bildungsrat had been formed in 1965 to offer guidance in educational planning and development at the national level. While it did not have the power to implement its recommendations, it provided an organizational base for some of the most prominent reform activists. The Bildungsrat could address its concerns and recommendations directly to the general public and thereby encourage debate and political action. The experimental program, in their eyes, became a way to getting the reforms off the drawing board and into the schools.

In 1973, the BLK had completed the comprehensive educational plan, but the five CDU/CSU governed states (Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, and Schleswig-Holstein) opposed the reforms contained in the plan. The six Länder governed by the SPD alone or in coalition with the FDP (Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia) committed to the plan which called for the gradual introduction of the new school. In Hesse and Berlin, the comprehensive schools were already gaining acceptance as a viable alternative to the traditional system.

Given the ambitious program of experimentation, the pace of the West German reform movement was rapid. This presented a considerable challenge to reformers particularly in given the complexity and extensive nature of the reform plans. In West Berlin, for example, the time pressure affected planners and practitioners. Curricular plans and materials had to be

developed, time schedules worked out, and decisions made on a wide range of complicated and unpredictable organizational arrangements, including the question of differentiation in a very short period of time.[28] This gave rise to conflicts between teachers and administrators even in a political climate receptive to change.

At the federal level, there seemed to be a contradiction between what policy officials felt was required to accomplish the reform program and the exigencies of the political situation. While individuals active in promoting the Bildungsrat's program of reform advocated a process of long-term, incremental reform, they also felt compelled to participate in the expeditious preparation of major recommendations like the "Bildungsbericht '70" and the Structural Plan.[29] The haste with which these preparations were made contrasted sharply with the long range nature of the goals.

Perhaps the sense of urgency which pervaded educational reform plans during the early 1970s reflected the real concerns of federal politicians that their period of ascendancy might well be short-lived. Widespread support for educational reform was relatively brief in West Germany. After the 1976 elections, the Social Democratic Party seemed increasingly aware that the

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[28]Jurgen Raschert, Gesamtschule. Ein gesellschaftliches Experiment (Stuttgart: Klett, 1974).

[29]Deutscher Bildungsrat, Empfehlungen der Bildungskommission, Strukturplan für das Bildungswesen (Stuttgart: Klett, 1970); Der Bundesminister für Bildung und Wissenschaft, "Report of the Federal Government on Education 1970. Bildungsbericht '70." Sonderdruck Bildung und Wissenschaft 2. (BMBW: Bonn, 1970). Among these individuals were prominent educational policy figures like Dr. Hildegard Hamm-Brucher and Professor Hellmut Becker. Some of their views and experiences, including some telling frustrations, are discussed in Hellmut Becker, Bildungsforschung und Bildungsplanung (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971); and Hildegard Hamm-Brücher, Unfähig zur Reform? Kritik und Initiativen zur Bildungspolitik (Munich: Piper, 1972).

reforms were not a political asset. In 1977, the SPD attempted to reorganize its internal structure to generate renewed support for the educational reforms, but eventually they backed an approach which accepted that educational policy had to be guided by state and local decisions.[30]

While the reform period lasted, even those who disagreed about the priorities acknowledged the need for change. In this atmosphere, experimentation suited the objectives of both sides in the policy debate. Conservatives who viewed education's primary directive to be the fulfillment of individual talents and encouraging academic excellence allowed some experiments with new approaches to secondary education. Experimentation did not mean the wholesale adoption of a new school structure. Convinced that the existing educational system did a better job of educating academically gifted students, CDU policy-makers were willing to allow comprehensive school supporters the opportunity to experiment with the comprehensive school model. While Bavaria, Baden-Württemburg, and Schleswig-Holstein, for instance, did not engage in as widespread an experimental program as other Länder, educational policy leaders in these conservative Länder were interested in generating evidence which would "prove" that the traditional structure surpassed the comprehensive school model on a number of important measures, particularly with respect to the achievement levels of students in the academic segment.

The active participation of researchers and experts on the Bildungsrat secured the basis for the Education Commission's recommendations in favor of experimentation with the comprehensive school during the period of first

[30]Gerard Braunthal, The West German Social Democrats, 1969-1982: Profile of a Party in Power (Boulder: Westview, 1983), pp. 254-5.

Bildungsrat. But their involvement was insufficient to sustain a strategy of confrontation. While policy reformers had hoped the experimental schools would lead to viable compromises and accepted practices, it became increasingly apparent during the period after 1973 that this would not be possible. While the Bildungsrat provided policy activists with a forum from which to pursue a somewhat independent policy course by issuing recommendations directly to the public, when receptivity to reform initiatives began to dwindle, the Bildungsrat members were left with few political resources to fortify their position.

The experimental program proved insufficient to convince skeptics and opponents. A number of important reasons emerge in attempting to explain the inadequacy of even this large scale experimental program. Some of the problems were directly related to the experimental program. Researchers, many of them experts in the fields of pedagogy and educational practice were expected to provide both program evaluation and practical assistance. These conflicting demands were the cause of considerable confusion and frustration among all parties -- researchers, teachers, students, parents, and administrators. Reformers and opponents had fundamentally different orientations toward the role of research. Reformers viewed experimentation as a constructive way to improve and refine the policy. Opponents saw experimentation as a commitment to test the policy objectively and scientifically. The same logic which led reformers to advocate experimentation as a compromise solution provided a means for opponents to block reform.

Teachers and parents expected researchers to provide them with practical support and solutions to overcome the difficulties they were encountering with

entirely new curricula, school organizations, and class composition to name only a few of the obstacles to success. Researchers, on the other hand, were caught between the requirements of scientifically controlled investigations and pressures from practitioners (and in many cases an honest desire on their own part) to be of practical assistance.

Where researchers were able to resolve these competing demands on their time and objectives, there were still a large number of factors which prevented or inhibited the application of strict scientific rationality. As evaluation studies of the Begleitforschung projects show, there are tremendous problems of comparability both between the comprehensive school and the traditional tripartite school system, and between different comprehensive schools, depending on location, population density, and school age population, to name just a few of the factors. All of these elements complicated the application of statistical control procedures and made it difficult to assess the impact or performance of the comprehensive school.

Research on the experimental schools presented other difficulties in generating support for reform. In some instances, the presence of researchers in the school interfered with the school practice by disturbing the learning environment. Other research resulted in findings which could be interpreted as shortcomings of the reforms. Opponents seemed justified in their claim that the best and brightest students exhibited lower achievement levels than their counterparts in the traditional school system, although others showed no

difference.[31] Some studies claimed that comprehensive school students exhibited a greater proclivity toward aggressive and antisocial behavior.[32]

Research did provide some ammunition for pro-reform forces. Fend, for example, found that a greater proportion of students in the comprehensive school completed their education and received diplomas than did those in the tripartite system.[33] The new school form allowed for greater mobility between different programs and students took advantage of this option. There was also some evidence that students in the comprehensive schools acquired greater tolerance and acceptance of others, apparently as a consequence of the more heterogeneous group of students attending the comprehensive school.[34]

But even the extensive research and experimentation efforts were insufficient to overcome the obstacle presented by CDU/CSU opposition, particularly at the Land level. By 1974, the Christian Democrats and the academic teachers union, the Philologenverband, had become increasingly vocal in their opposition to SPD reform plans both at the Land and federal levels. In North-Rhine Westphalia, for example, the CDU fought the SPD-FDP government's policy with respect to the comprehensive schools and, through the

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[31]Aurin's research showed lower achievement levels; Fend's showed no appreciable difference. Kurt Aurin, Bernd Schwarz, Rolf-Dietmar Thiel, Gegliedertes Schulsystem und Gesamtschule Vergleichsuntersuchung des Landes Baden-Württemberg, Band I: Forschungskonzept und Methoden, Band II: Unterrichtserfolge und Forderwirkungen (Stuttgart: Ministerium fur Kultus und Sport, 1986); Fend, Gesamtschule im Vergleich.

[32]This is the claim of one member of the Dusseldorf-based research group involved in evaluating programs in North Rhine-Westphalia interviewed by the author in 1986. The study was never published.

[33]Helmut Fend, Gesamtschule im Vergleich. Bilanz der Ergebnisse des Gesamtschulversuchs (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz, 1982).

[34]The findings of both Aurin and Fend support this claim.

use of a citizens' initiative managed to repeal a state law to introduce cooperative centers. These were not even comprehensive schools in the strict sense but rather school centers where the three traditional school forms would be brought into physical proximity with some integration of the first "orientation" grades. Nevertheless, the conservative opposition managed to have its way and in April of 1978 the law was amended so that the cooperative centers would be established only if a majority of local citizens favored such an action.[35]

As the research on the comprehensive school experiments accumulated, the findings became more difficult for reformers to address. In part this had to do with the complexity and technical nature of many of the reports. Understanding the significance of the findings frequently required familiarity with sophisticated statistical techniques and inference methods. Researchers also started to challenge each others findings. One of the most extensive evaluation reports came under fire not only for its framing of the questions researchers asked, but also for the analysis and interpretation of the findings.[36]

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[35]Hans-Georg Lehmann, "Schulreform und Politik," Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, Beilage, Das Parlament, B 36/78, Sept. 9, 1978, pp. 3-23, cited in Braunthal, The West German Social Democrats, p. 255.

[36]Helmut Fend's Gesamtschule im Vergleich came under fire from Heinrich Wottawa in "Die Kunst der manipulativen Berichtlegung in der Evaluationsforschung." Zeitschrift fur Entwicklungspsychologie und Padagogische Psychologie 13 (1981):45-60; and idem., Gesamtschule: Was sie uns wirklich bringt. (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1982). Fend responded in his "Stellungnahme zu Wottawa 'Die Kunst der manipulativen Berichtlegung.'" Zeitschrift fur Entwicklungspsychologie und Pädagogische Psychologie 13 (1981):61-70.

The "Projekt Gesamtschule" group was appointed by the BLK in 1976 to provide summarize relevant evaluation research.[37] The members, experts and educational policy administrators, were to review and assess the results of the BLK's program of Begleitforschung, research projects which accompanied experimental school programs. The membership was recruited based on their involvement in the Gesamtschule reforms in some important capacity and because they represented a cross-section of the Länder. Despite their competence, they got bogged down in many of the same interpretive problems politicians had faced. The researchers and the administrators operated within two very different discourses. Researchers spoke a language which emphasized theoretical questions and scientific logic. Their heavy reliance on statistical inference tended to impede the administrators' understanding of the research. Administrators were concerned with the practical policy implications of the findings and how to put them to use. The researchers on the panel expended much time and energy teaching the administrators about their techniques. In addition, researchers and administrators visited many comprehensive schools to get a first-hand look at the physical reality of the Gesamtschulen. Administrators emphasized the practical considerations involved in operating the comprehensive schools. Given these differences, it is not surprising that the evaluation group split on a number of issues. Interestingly enough, the split was not so much between those of different political allegiances as between the scientists and the administrators. Even so, like many of the researchers who figured most prominently in the

[37]Their findings were published as Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung, Modellversuch mit Gesamtschulen: Auswertungsbericht der Projektgruppe Gesamtschule (Bühl/Baden: Konkordia, 1982).

Begleitforschung program, these experts -- both administrators and researchers in the group -- saw themselves as impartial and objective with respect to the political controversy in which they were involved.

Not all experts involved in the model programs and Begleitforschung, however, remained impartial. There were a considerable number who were outspoken partisans, particularly those who were strong advocates of an even more radical approach to democratizing education.[38] However, their research was probably less influential as a source of legitimation because of their explicit position on the reform. Similarly, research conducted by the Bavarian ministry of education was called into question, largely because the value orientation of the commissioning authorities influenced the design of the research and the way research questions were formulated.[39] When the appearance of objectivity of the research, the researcher, or even the commissioning agency was called into question, the legitimating impact of research or expertise was significantly reduced, if not neutralized.

By 1980, the SPD was no longer willing to stake its political future on the educational reform program. In that year's federal election campaign, the Social Democrats proposed to introduce comprehensive schools only in

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[38]Among these were Professor Hartmut von Hentig and Professor Hans-Günther Rolff. Some of their views are presented in Hartmut von Hentig, "Ein selbstkritisches Nachwort." Beiträge zum Lernzielproblem 16 (Ratingen: Kultusminister des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1972); idem., Systemzwang und Selbstbestimmung. Über die Bedingungen der Gesamtschule in der Industriegesellschaft (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1977); idem., Aufwachsen in Vernuft. Kommentare zur Dialektik der Bildungsreform (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981); and Klaus Klemm, Hans-Günter Rolff, Klaus-Jürgen Tillmann, Bildung für das Jahr 2000. Bilanz der Reform, Zukunft der Schule (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1985).

[39]For example, Helmut Lukesch, "Ergebnisse und 'Ergebnisse' -- Bemerkungen zu den Begleituntersuchungen über die bayerischen Schulversuche mit Gesamtschulen," Zeitschrift für Pädagogik 31 (1985):525-41.

localities where the parents wanted them. It was true that in places like Berlin and Bremen where the comprehensive schools were fairly well-established, the demand for places in the comprehensive schools exceeded capacity. But in other areas the comprehensive school had awakened strong opposition which only seemed to lead to greater controversy and conflict.

When the report of the BLK's evaluation group presented its report in 1982, the reform period had for all practical purposes ended. The CDU/CSU and the SPD-FDP Länder had reached an understanding that existing comprehensive schools would be accepted as a legal school form. But there were no plans to expand the provision of Gesamtschulen and in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, for example, policy officials hoped the few existing comprehensive schools would eventually be phased out. The experimental program was concluded and a relatively small number of the experimental schools, mostly in the Länder which had been under SPD-FDP rule during the experimental period, were incorporated into the existing structure of secondary education.

Despite the fact that the involvement of experts on public commissions and the use of policy experimentation did not result in the adoption of the comprehensive school in West Germany, the involvement of experts in the policy planning process in education persists. The institutional changes which have survived include the federal ministry of education and science and the BLK, although neither of these appears to be prepared to launch such an ambitious reform program in the immediate future.

The Gesamtschule reform process has taken its toll on reformers and researchers. Interviews with educational administrators and researchers indicate that many are far more reticent to involve themselves in similar research in the future. The personal cost of involvement in a policy battle

and becoming identified with a particular set of political views can be substantial, particularly in a cultural setting which places considerable weight on objectivity in research and decision-making. A reputation for unbiased expertise and research is crucial to researchers who rely on government research funds.

West German educational policy officials continue to pursue the elusive goal of a long range plan for their educational system. The rising importance of Enquête commissions sponsored by the Bundestag constitutes yet another institutional basis for the incorporation of expertise into the policy process.[40] On 9 December 1987, the Bundestag voted in favor of establishing an Enquête commission, "Future Educational Policy -- Education 2000."[41] The commission consists of nine members of the Bundestag and eight experts. It appears that expertise will, for the foreseeable future, continue to play a role in West German educational policy planning at the federal level.

Conclusion

Today it seems hard to imagine a period in time when experts were not an integral part of the public policy process. For almost any conceivable issue, there are individuals with specialized knowledge who can be called upon to offer advice and analysis. But as much as we take their participation for granted, experts are in fact a relatively recent addition to public decision-

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[40]See the comparative treatment of the German Enquête Commissions and the British Royal Commissions in Klaus Lompe, Hans Heinrich Rass, and Dieter Rehfeld, Enquête-Kommissionen und Royal Commissions. Beispiele wissenschaftlicher Politikberatung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in Gro britannien (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1981).

[41]"'Zukunftige Bildungspolitik - Bildung 2000,'" Informationen Bildung und Wissenschaft (January 1988), p. 15.

making. The historical events briefly summarized here provide interesting illustrations of how, when, why, and with what effects experts were drawn into educational policy-making in Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany.

While public policy textbooks advocate the application of rational norms and scientific assessments of alternatives to produce better public policy, the goal of rationalized public decision-making remains illusive. In fact, it may be that even under ideal circumstances, this approach to authoritatively allocating values in society[42] is fundamentally incompatible with the role of the state, with the distribution of interests in society, and with existing policy practices.

Nevertheless, experts and policy experimentation have become important additions to the policy process in most advanced industrial democracies. In the case of educational policy in Sweden and West Germany, experts first joined the policy process during the reform movement which brought the issue of comprehensive secondary education onto the political agenda. Their incorporation into the decision-making process was part of a larger program of research and policy experimentation to gain acceptance of a wholly new school form. Over the course of the policy process, experts served on governmental commissions and performed research related to the experimental programs.

The experimental programs can be viewed as part of a larger project of rationalizing educational reform. But the tentative nature of a policy experiment poses some problems for policy officials seeking reform. It can be difficult to maintain the aura of objectivity in the heat of a political battle. Especially when different value systems come into conflict, e.g.

[42]David Easton's now famous definition of politics. David Easton, The Political System (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953).

between achievement principles/meritocracy and egalitarianism, the status of experts and the credibility of results from experimental programs can be called into question. Research and expert opinions mobilized on both sides of a policy proposal can fuel a controversy rather than provide scientifically-based decisions. When this occurs, as was the case in West Germany, the political aspects of the dispute over proposed reforms takes over.

On the other hand, when the authority of experts was not called into question, as in the Swedish case, they became an important part of the reform program. The permanent institutionalization of experts and a directorate for policy experimentation at the Swedish Board of Education (SO) is a measure of the impact the successful experimentation with the comprehensive school had on the administrative capacity of the state.

The incorporation of expertise and the use of experimentation provided a buffer for both states at least temporarily in the sense that the pretense of engaging in decision-making on the basis of rational criteria meant that state officials and policy-makers would not be held entirely responsible for policy failure. Precisely because scientific objectivity requires that the researcher leave the outcome of the experiment open to either a negative or a positive result, it does not presuppose a commitment to any particular outcome of the trial program.

The two cases also point to the importance of public commissions in channelling expert participation. In the Swedish case, experts were a new element in an established format of structured consultation which had traditionally included both royal commissions and the remiss process. In the German case, however, experts were linked to the fate of organizations like the Bildungsrat and the BLK which had enlisted their assistance. During the

first period of the Bildungsrat, for example, there was a general receptivity to expertise and policy experimentation among policy officials and the attentive public. When the political tide turned, however, experts, researchers, and the experimental programs themselves were drawn into the political battle to determine whether the federal government would succeed in shifting the initiative in educational policy from the Land level to the national level.

The particular sources of conflict inherent in the policy field of education also had an impact on the use of experts and policy experimentation. In both cases, teachers who feared loss of prestige and the elimination of a form of school with which they strongly identified mobilized to block reform. In the Swedish case, they were unsuccessful partly because they acted so late in the reform process and partly because of the skillful and strong leadership of the central educational bureaucracy -- the SO. In Germany, the academic teachers enlisted some powerful allies, particularly among CDU/CSU politicians at the Land level but also among academics and researchers. In some federal states they were able to raise concern among parent groups as well.

Ultimately, the issue of differentiation went unresolved, perhaps because only a political compromise could end the debate which was based on two completely different notions of how education should be organized and for what purposes. In the Swedish case, reformers eventually conceded a final year of differentiated study and some ability tracking in a few courses. In the German case, differentiation remains a strong element in the educational system. While the traditional schools have incorporated some of the innovations first tried out in the comprehensive schools, the comprehensive schools themselves entail some differentiation. Today the comprehensive

school in some ways can be viewed as a fourth element grafted on to the tripartite system.[43]

The long-term consequences of the reform movements for the Swedish and West German state power may be impossible to assess. Perhaps it will require a generation or more of students growing up under the existing circumstances to fully understand the implications of the (attempted) reforms. But from an institutional perspective, both states have permanently incorporated expertise into their educational policy-making units. In the case of Sweden, the SO's research division is one of the largest and most powerful departments of a large and powerful agency. The idea of continual experimentation to provide new insights into the operation of the educational system and to adapt schools to the changing social and economic environment is a direct product of the comprehensive school reform movement. Experimental programs on the grand scale undertaken in Germany, however, are not likely to reemerge in the near future. The experiences gained from these extended reform periods in both countries has permanently altered the way educational policy is made and the way reform will be approached in the future.

[43]Jürgen Baumert, "Differenzierung des Sekundarschulangebots oder neue Dreigliedrigkeit?" Zeitschrift fur Sozialisationsforschung und Erziehungssoziologie 5 (1980):109-127; Jürgen Baumert and Helmut Köhler, "Trends and Perspectives of Secondary Education in West Berlin," European Journal of Education 19 (1985):365-84.

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